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House Armed Services Subcommittee on Air and Land Forces Holds Hearing on the Army National Guard and Air National Guard Equipment Programs

LIST OF PANEL MEMBERS AND WITNESSES

ABERCROMBIE:

Aloha, everybody. Thank you very much for coming today.

This is a very crucial meeting, from our standpoint, in this subcommittee. Some of us have had longstanding questions and observations with respect to the Army National Guard and Air National Guard, both from the equipment perspective and personnel perspective as we've seen this transition going all the way back to Kosovo and Serbia and the whole redirection, if you will, of American military effort vis-a-vis the Guard and Reserve in terms of an operational force and the implications and consequences of that, over time.

And we're particularly well served, I think, by having Major General Raymond Carpenter, the acting deputy director of the Army National Guard and Lieutenant General Harry Wyatt, the director of the Air National Guard, because I think both of you have a long-term perspective on precisely these questions and their implication.

Secretary Gates has adopted 82 recommendations from the congressionally mandated Commission on the National Guard and Reserves. One of those recommendations was to equip and resource the Guard and Reserve component as an operational reserve rather than a Cold War model of a strategic reserve. When I say Cold War model, that's a popular way of putting it, whether it was a Cold War or no Cold War, the Guard and Reserves' mission mandate and the understanding of what that was precedes the Cold War.

And from my point of view, equipping and resourcing the Guard and Reserve as an operational reserve is not merely a logistical activity or a convenience for auditing purposes, economically or otherwise, but as a change in doctrine, fundamental doctrine, that deserves a much more extended conversation than we've had, inasmuch as virtually no conversation at all. And this hearing today I hope will provide at least some basis for that conversation because of the nature of the requirements associated with the change in direction in terms of equipment.

The old strategic reserve model assumed very few mobilizations and assumed risk with inadequate equipping strategies, in my estimation. The change to an operational reserve status, coincident with the re-organization of the Army,

has greatly increased the amount of equipment that the Guard and Reserve units are required to have, required not by us or a doctrine, per se, but required by the elements of the deployments to which the Guard and Reserve have been assigned, and are likely to be assigned in the near and distant future.

While the department is making improvements and progress in providing adequate funding to equip the National Guard to enhance its role as an operational reserve, there are significant number of units that do not have the required equipment. Sustaining this funding and having the necessary transparency and accountability to the equipment, however, remains a challenge.

That is a very mild way of saying that, while I think the Guard and Reserve can pretty well -- and has pretty well calculated what its needs are, what its requirements are in terms of equipment and personnel and training, I can't say the same for the Pentagon in terms of being able to even account for what it's done to this point. There's been tens of billions of dollars of additional funding over the baseline pre-change in doctrine, but whether that's trickled down to the Guard and Reserve is not an open question.

I believe that the record shows that it has not. The billions have dissipated, but not into the capacity of the Guard and Reserve to either have the equipment, have the personnel to complete training standards, let alone prepared to be deployed and redeployed.

So the purpose of today's hearing is to get a straightforward assessment of the equipment needs of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard now, and in the context that these components are to be there as an operational reserve.

The witnesses have been asked to lay out what equipment levels their organizations are required to have, how these requirements have changed, as well as what equipment levels they actually have on hand.

General Carpenter and General Wyatt have also been asked to provide their views on the adequacy of the fiscal year 2009 budget and, to the extent possible, given the constraints that prevail in the Pentagon today, to the extent possible the 2010 budget request for equipping their elements. And we've also asked our witnesses to be prepared to provide a status of equipment readiness.

Just having the equipment on paper or in reality does not necessarily coincide with the readiness component. There you have to include personnel as well as whether or not we're counting reset and depot or originated equipment, et cetera.

So with that in mind, that's quite a task. There obviously are many elements that the military considers when it judges a unit combat-ready, equipment being key to it.

Compared to other measures of readiness, equipment readiness is fairly straightforward. Either you have the equipment you need or you don't. Without the right type and amounts of equipment, even the most dedicated and experienced soldier or airman cannot train for combat or provide adequate

assistance when there is a domestic emergency.

So for a variety of reasons that today's hearing I hope will explore, the number of units in the National Guard that can report that they are at the highest level of equipment readiness has declined, at least in the judgment of the committee to this point. And it's declined since 2001.

We also learned this week that this continues to be a problem for the entire Army. It's not just the National Guard that's having this difficulty. And while most Guard units deployed overseas have all the equipment they require, many of those units don't get all that equipment until just before deployment, in some cases after they deploy, and whether or not this constitutes the kind of readiness that you feel as commanders are required is another question I hope you'll explore.

At a minimum, it makes training to deploy difficult. Given the operational reserve equipage model, a large percentage of non-deployed Army National Guard units are far below Army standards for equipment on hand in terms of the statistics that I've seen to this juncture.

In addition, the Army National Guard forces that deployed to Iraq in 2002 and 2004 left much of their equipment in theater for follow-on forces to use if that was, in fact, able to be done. I know you could leave it, but whether it was usable is another story. It's unclear whether that equipment will be replaced, and I hope you'll be able to speak to the question of whether it was usable, or to the degree it was usable, and for how long.

This is particularly an important question, gentlemen, because we are now talking of redeploying forces and equipment to Afghanistan and perhaps other areas adjacent to Afghanistan.

Aging aircraft continue to be a critical issue for the Air National Guard. The Air National Guard aircraft are, on average, 28 years old, with the KC-135 tankers, need I say, averaging 48 years at this stage.

If the problems of equipment shortages and aging equipment persist, National Guard units, while dedicated and willing -- and I take that as a stipulation we'll have no trouble in sustaining -- no matter how dedicated and willing, they may simply not be able to adequately respond to domestic emergencies, let alone trade in (ph) for combat.

And I don't want to underplay the domestic emergencies. You don't have to think of Katrina as being only a once in a lifetime proposition to think about what domestic emergencies constitute - tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes. I suppose we're going to get the locusts soon.

At least what this new president is facing, that seems to be next. When you're re-naming flu, you know that you're at the crisis stage.

No amount of dedication or desire or willpower can overcome a lack of transportation, communication and construction equipment when a National

Guard unit is trying to help people hit by one of those tornadoes or those hurricanes or floods, et cetera.

Congress has not hesitated in trying to address the equipment readiness shortfalls. For purposes of the record and for those who are new members to the committee, this subcommittee, and subsequently the full committee, was instrumental in seeing a reallocation of funding, close to \$1 billion, in the last go-round, a reallocation within the Army of funds that could not usefully be spent in certain areas of research and development.

We were able to get that money transferred to the National Guard. But that was, in my judgment, the proverbial drop in the bucket compared to what was needed, but we were happy, nonetheless, to get at least that amount of money over to you.

So we have tried to address the readiness equipment shortfall, and since 2001, then, the Congress has provided almost \$11 billion above what was in the previous administration's budget for funding. \$50 billion altogether has been provided for equipment since 2001.

On the surface, that seems like an awful lot. But as I've indicated in the previous portion of my remarks, I hope you can account for where that \$50 billion went, because I don't see much of it showing up in your immediate equipment account.

We provided \$2 billion -- Congress, that is to say, has provided \$2 billion to the Guard and Reserve in a separate dedicated funding account over the past two years. Again, please forgive me. Those of you who have been on the committee for a long time, you're well aware of that.

But as I say, we have new members here, and the public may not be entirely aware of what we're doing. That's the reason for the length and the depth of these remarks.

I say to both of you gentlemen not because I don't expect that you know it, but I want to make sure that it's on the record and people who may be observing are fully informed. So we have put \$2 billion in a separate dedicated funding account, and I have an idea that we're going to have to do a lot more of that upcoming.

So this funding has enjoyed sustained bipartisan support both on this committee and throughout the Congress. I want to commend Mr. Lobiondo in particular for his attention in these areas. And I can tell you that it is good to have people on the committee who have sustained their interest over a long period of time, as he has.

So we made some progress then in terms of funding and re-organization, but I'm hoping that, as a result of the testimony today, we're going to have the foundation to be able to come into this next defense bill and really concentrate on Guard and Reserve requirements, using equipment as the taking-off point for what

we do.

So what we want to find out today, then, is exactly how equipment funding that has been provided has been used to address equipment shortfalls. Where'd the money go? What progress has been made on improving visibility of tracking equipment requirements through budget preparation and review?

That's what we have to do right now. You can be very helpful to us today. We have to be able to tell the committee as a whole, and then the appropriators and the Congress as a whole, exactly what we need to do to see to it that the Guard and Reserve are prepared to do what we have been requiring them to do up till now, and I have no doubt are going to require of them in the immediate future.

We need to be able to know what the funding allocation should be and, ultimately, how we should direct the distribution of equipment, if necessary, in the defense bill itself.

We want to know why equipment readiness rates continue to remain very low for many non-deployed units despite significant additional funds having been provided. No sense in us just putting the money out there, both authorized and appropriated, if it's not really getting to you in a way that proves useful.

So, for example, how much of the \$50 billion in funding since 2001 has actually been used to provide additional equipment for you in a way that is useful and immediate? Has the funding been used for the intended purposes, or has it dissipated?

Regardless of what the reasoning is, or was, has it been dissipated? And finally, then, for the 2010 budget, what needs to be done by this subcommittee, our full committee and the Congress, to address this problem either through legislation or funding?

I am grateful to you and to the members for this rather extended commentary at the beginning. I don't generally want to do it. But I thought it was so important that we have on the record, both for the new members and the public, exactly what was at stake that I took a little bit more time than I ordinarily would have liked.

And with that in mind, I am looking forward to the commentary and observations of my good friend and someone who has the long-term perspective on what this is about, because even though I've mentioned Mr. Lobiondo favorably, I can tell you that Roscoe Bartlett was on this issue.

I remember, very, very well when I was sitting way down at the other end of this podium now, and in fact, I think it was probably Curt Weldon and Roscoe Bartlett that first brought to everybody's attention on the committee what the implications for the National Guard and Reserve might be way back in the early '90s.

Roscoe?

BARTLETT:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.

And to our witnesses, welcome. And thank you very much for your service to our country, and we're happy you're with us today.

The Army National Guard predates the founding of our nation and a standing military by almost a century and a half, and is therefore the oldest component of the United States Armed Forces. America's first permanent militia regiment among the oldest continuing units in history, were organized by the Massachusetts Bay Colonies 1636. Since that time, the Guard has participated in every U.S. conflict to include current deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Today's National Guard and Reserve personnel continue the long tradition of protecting our nation, and they do so in a magnificent manner. As you know, Mr. Chairman, the National Guard is no longer considered a strategic reserve. It is now considered an operational reserve.

From an equipment perspective, I absolutely agree that, if we are going to continue to expect so much from our Reserve forces, then we not only must -- not only must we properly equip them, but we must equip them with modern equipment. Army National Guard equipment funding has increased substantially since the late '90s, where it was in the hundreds of millions of dollars to billions of dollars today.

To be fair, the Army has made significant progress in equipping the Army National Guard, but more progress is needed. For example, in the early 2000s, the Guard had approximately 1,500 medium tactical vehicles. Today, almost 10,000.

While I certainly support the increasing equipment funding, I have two concerns. First although equipping accounts have increased, they have increased as a result of supplemental appropriation bills. The supplementals go away, we must ensure that the National Guard continues to get proper funding in the base budget.

Second, given the tremendous increase in funding for the Guard, Congress and our chairman has really emphasized the importance of this -- was that full transparency into how the Guard requirements are being met and clear processes in place in order to know where all this equipment is going.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today, and I want to thank you again, for your service to our country and for appearing before us this afternoon.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ABERCROMBIE:

Thank you, Mr. Bartlett. And for the record, you were not there originally, were you, when that was first formed? I know ...

BARTLETT:

My father was.

ABERCROMBIE:

OK. All right.

So we'll go to the panel now, and then go to questions. And we're going to do the questions in, I think it's reverse order of seniority today. But without objection, all witnesses' prepared statements will be included in the hearing record, so you need not read it word for word. And if you care to summarize and-or respond, even in part to some of the opening remarks, please do so.

And with that, I think we'll go right to General Carpenter. And welcome.

CARPENTER:

Thank you, Chairman Abercrombie, Ranking Member Bartlett and members of the committee for the opportunity for us to appear before you today. It's my honor and distinct pleasure to represent some 366,000 Army National Guardsmen, many of who are on point for our nation as we speak today in this hearing.

I also have the pleasure of representing my retiring boss, soon to be retired boss, Lieutenant General Vaughn. I refer to him as a plain-speaking Missouri Guardsman, and to his credit, I think that he can take credit for a lot of what's happened here in the Army National Guard here in the past four years over his tenure.

If you'll indulge me for a moment, sir, I would like to recognize someone that is sitting directly behind me. And that recognition is in commitment to the service and willingness of the great sacrifices on behalf of our nation that the NCOs in the Army and the Army National Guard make on a daily basis.

The secretary of the Army has established 2009 as the Year Of The NCO. The U.S. Army's Non-Commissioned Officer Corps has distinguished itself as one of the world's most accomplished group of military professionals.

With me today is Staff Sergeant Marquez (ph). She is a member of the NCO Corps of the Army National Guard. She joined the California Guard in 2000 at the age of 17. In 2004, she deployed to Camp Victory in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. She is currently a Virginia National Guardsman and, by the way, served in support of -- most recently in support of the inauguration.

She is an NCO, Operations NCO in our operations division here in the Army National Guard. She's been married for a little over two months. She married a Marine Corps staff Sergeant, Sean Jeanus (ph), who is currently deployed into Afghanistan. So, sir, I would like to have Sergeant Marquez (ph) stand and be recognized for her service as an NCO in the Army and the Army National Guard.

(APPLAUSE)

ABERCROMBIE:

Sergeant Marquez (ph), aloha, and welcome. And I see you're still smiling. Two months of marriage, and you're not quitting yet. Good for you.

MARQUEZ:

It's perfect, sir. He's gone.

ABERCROMBIE:

There's some people wish the same thing about us.

CARPENTER:

Sir, thank you for your introductory remarks. We believe you're right on target.

Over the last four years, the Army, the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve has set about the task of equipping the Reserve components and hopefully moving closer to what we call an operational reserve. And frankly, in many cases, that isn't an operational reserve. It's a strategic reserve on steroids, as my boss likes to refer to it.

We have been fortunate to have been the recipients of generous equipment funding that has been provided by this committee by Congress, and NGRE, National Guard Reserve Equipment Account, has been part and parcel and key to that equipping piece. We have used that account specifically to buy what we call Critical Dual-Use equipment, CDU equipment, and that equipment, by definition, is equipment that can be used in the war fight and can also be used for emergencies and disasters for our homeland defense and security mission.

We have seen some great strides here in equipping the Army National Guard. You may have read recently where the secretary of defense made some remarks in a number of war college locations a couple weeks ago. And one of the remarks that he made was that the Army National Guard had 70 percent of its equipment prior to 9/11, and we are striving to get back to 70 percent as we move forward.

But the difference is that the type of equipment we had prior to 9/11 was, for the most part, cascaded equipment that came from the Army, not modernized, and much of it not deployable. To the Army's credit and to this committee's credit, we will retire our last Huey helicopter this year. We have had that helicopter in our inventory for four decades.

And through the funding and process and modernization, that helicopter has been replaced by the Black Hawk helicopter and the light utility helicopter. And again, the success of that is those Huey helicopters will be gone from our inventory this year.

We've seen the deuce-and-a-half, the 2.5-ton truck that was the main staple for us in the Army National Guard for many years, will be retired out of our inventory by the year 2012. We have seen M-60 machine guns, which is the legacy machine guns, transaction the M-240 machine guns, the modernized version, and we will have those make up the bulk of our inventory by the close of this year.

The VRC-12 radio, which again is a Vietnam legacy radio, has been retired out of our inventory. So there have been some great strides made in the modernization piece for us as we go forward into the 21st century here and support not just the war fight, but also support our emergency and disaster mission. And that's critical to us.

Sir, as you know, courtesy of the recent storms in Hawaii, Hawaii Guardsmen responded to that, and they were on duty for almost a month in support of the citizens of Hawaii. In the Kentucky ice storm, we had soldiers -- the entire Kentucky National Guard was mobilized and responded to that particular disaster. We had soldiers who came back from the 39th Brigade from Arkansas, got off the airplane, and in a relatively short period of time were assisting the citizens of Arkansas in that particular disaster.

And so, in the National Guard, our responsibility is to be able to fight tonight, and that fight is in the homeland. And that homeland mission has to do with responding to the needs of our citizens in emergencies and disasters, whether it happens to be a storm in Hawaii, a flood in North Dakota, a fire in California, or a hurricane in the hurricane states of Mississippi, Texas and Louisiana.

So, where are the holes at with regard to our equipping process right now? We've made, as I mentioned, huge strides, but we still have some work to do in the truck fleet, both in modernization and in filling the holes, battle command equipment, and a lot of the combat service support equipment we still have a requirement. Whether it be generators, material handling equipment, water purification systems, and even tactical ambulance that serve both a homeland mission and a war fight mission, these requirements remain unfilled in many cases.

You discussed briefly transparency. That has been a huge issue for us in the Army National Guard. And I think a little bit of that had to do with the frustration of what you just described in that money was appropriated, but we didn't see a

response immediately with regard to the equipment that came to the National Guard.

Part of that has to do with the process that it takes in terms of equipment acquisition. Many times, the appropriation was at the end of the FY, and it takes, in some cases, up to two and a half years to acquire some of these pieces of equipment, especially the more complex modernized truck fleet and some of the helicopters.

So even though the appropriation was, for instance, in a 2007 budget, we may not have seen, or may not see that piece of equipment in our inventory till perhaps mid-2009 or perhaps even as late as 2010.

And so the frustration was how do we keep track of what was appropriated and what was showing up in our bullpens and our vehicle storage areas in the Army National Guard? And as my boss is likened to say, he said, "It's like writing a check for \$100 in '07 and then asking what did I buy in '09," and you can't get an answer.

Well, thankfully, transparency has become a huge issue and has received a lot of emphasis. The Army has put forth a great effort in conjunction with the Reserve components in the Army National Guard, and we have a pilot program that involves 75 percent of the money that was appropriated in '07, '08 and '09. And the effort here is to try and at least reconstruct what we can from those previous years' appropriations to identify what we think we've received and what we have yet to receive.

That pilot is to report out in July, and that pilot should give us a little bit of an indicator of exactly where we're at. We're pretty confident that it's headed in the right direction. It's not there yet, and I would encourage you to continue to ask questions about transparency as we go forward.

But suffice to say the Army and the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve have made great strides in the right direction to account for the appropriated dollars that you all have been generous enough to make sure that that National Guard has the equipment that we're supposed to have.

The reset piece you mentioned earlier, our issue is to try and make sure that the equipment that comes back to us in fact is functional and operational. And to that extent, we have 15 brigade combat teams and 131 other units in the Army National Guard that require reset in FY '09. Right now, there is money programmed for us to be able to do that reset. It just needs to stay on track and to ensure that we have the funding for the work that has to be accomplished.

You also mentioned the equipment that was left behind in Iraq in 2003, 2004, 2005. Honestly, the reason that equipment was left behind, because it was the most modernized equipment that the Army National Guard had. And that was the reason why - it was the kind of equipment that was needed to continue the war fight over there. This is separate from the battle losses and the damaged equipment that we saw with regard to our units.

The amount of equipment that we left behind, the estimated value was somewhere around \$3 billion. We received an appropriation of \$1.7 billion to offset that, and we continue to work with the Army in terms of identification of what the requirement is and the future funding to replace that equipment.

Suffice to say, we still have a ways to go, and we are working through that. Our biggest concern, however, is what happens in Afghanistan, because we are about to face the same situation. We have a landlocked country where it is very expensive to haul the equipment in and out, and it makes more sense to leave equipment there.

And so we just need to make sure that there's a proper accounting for the Army National Guard equipment that we are required to leave behind in Afghanistan. And again, we are working with the Army and the Department of Defense to figure out the correct process and compliance with DOD instruction 1225.6 to meet that requirement.

Sir, that concludes my opening remarks. Thank you for indulging me with my NCO introduction. And I look forward to your questions.

ABERCROMBIE:

Thank you.

General Wyatt, welcome and aloha to you.

WYATT:

Thank you, sir.

Chairman Abercrombie, Ranking Member Bartlett and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today representing the men and women of the Air National Guard, some 106,752 strong.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your comments opening the meeting today, and I would agree right on target. I also enjoyed the comment of Ranking Member Bartlett on the history of the National Guard. Thank you for recognizing the age of our institution.

Along those lines, if I could share a little history also with you, sir, in 1909, the U.S. Army Signal Corps purchased the world's first military aircraft, the Wright Military Flyer, for \$30,000. One hundred years have passed, and our aviation equipment has become more reliable, lethal, complex and, unfortunately, costly.

Even so, I cannot imagine our world today ...

ABERCROMBIE:

Excuse me, General Wyatt, excuse me. Was there a protest at the time?

WYATT:

No, sir.

ABERCROMBIE:

And did the GAO get into it?

WYATT:

I think there was only one manufacturer at the time, so probably not.

Even so, I cannot imagine our world today had that event 100 years ago not taken place. As we meet today, your Air National Guard airmen are proudly and admirably protecting skies with more than 3,000 members and 16 of 18 air sovereignty alert sites. They're ready to respond to disasters like hurricanes, tornadoes and fires that the chairman referenced earlier.

They're volunteering at unprecedented rates to support worldwide contingencies. And the backbone of our force, our traditional Guard members, are providing a critical surge capability for our Air Force.

Our Air National Guard airmen would not be able to do any of this without the support that we have received from you, Chairman Abercrombie, and the members of this committee. Through your support of the National Guard and Reserve equipment appropriation, we have been able to seamlessly integrate into the total Air Force while providing critical capabilities to the nation's governors.

Our top issues - I think these come as no surprise to the committee. First of all, modernize and recapitalize the aging Air National Guard fleet of aircraft to bridge the gap in mid-term Air Force capability and long-term expeditionary viability. An aging fleet requires more maintenance, which is one of our core competencies.

But it also requires more parts and more fuel. All eat away at already stressed readiness accounts, and perhaps some of that goes to answer the chairman's question on declining readiness.

If we do nothing to accelerate our recapitalization, you can expect more safety issues, perhaps more failed inspections, less combat capability, and mission gaps. It is essential that Air National Guard recapitalization and modernization occur proportionately, concurrently, and in parallel with the total Air Force. Otherwise, mission gaps will cascade across our force, leaving many Air National

Guard units without a mission.

Our Air National Guard aircraft are, on average, 28 years old. F-15s are 29, C-5s are 36 years old, KC-135s, 48 years old, as the chairman referenced. And if the F-16 fleet is not recapitalized soon, 80 percent will begin to reach the end of their service life in less than eight years.

You're well aware of the challenges that the U.S. Air Force has in modernizing and recapitalizing its fighter and refueling fleets. We've been working closely with the Air Force in their planning. But to date, there are no firm plans to replace the Air National Guard F-15 and F-16 fleets currently protecting our skies.

Past history would show that usually, when the Air Force recapitalizes its fleet, there is available for cascade legacy aircraft, or older aircraft, to the Air National Guard. That is no longer an option, as many of the aircraft in the active duty fleet are approaching the same ages as those in the Air National Guard. It's just that the Air National Guard has a greater percentage, and our aircraft are older.

Because of the characteristics of the Reserve component, our part-time force, it is essential that equipment changes be planned well in advance, a lesson learned during the BRAC processes. Over the last several years, Congress has been very helpful in supporting the Air National Guard's active electronically scanned array, the AESA radar, modernization program. This program allows us to meet today's threats and bridge capabilities to the next generation of fighter aircraft.

AESA is important to improve both capability and sustainment. Recently, a Cessna 172 was stolen in Canada. That entered the U.S. through Canada, and entered U.S. airspace in a -- had it entered in a high-traffic area, such as New York, it would have been very difficult for the older F-16s with their older radar to find, identify and track it with the equipment that they have on board today.

The aging KC-135 fleet, which was used from Alabama in this intercept, is an issue that the chairman has referenced. But in addition to the aircraft, we need to recognize that air sovereignty alert and many of the things that the Air National Guard does here in the United States of America is a system of systems, and all of the systems, each piece of those systems, shows its age.

As we equip our Air National Guard, we have to keep in mind the essential 10 capabilities that our governors need available to handle present and future threats. The National Guard Bureau is committed to the fundamental principle that each and every state and territory must possess these 10 core capabilities for homeland readiness.

We want to ensure that every governor has each of these 10 essential capabilities: command and control, civil support teams, engineering assets, communications, ground transportation, aviation, medical, security forces, logistics and maintenance. We continue to leverage approximately 98 percent of the equipment within the Air National Guard as critical dual-use equipment to

make certain that these capabilities are available for not only the combatant commanders in our AEF rotations, but also the governors.

Our expeditionary combat support capability has allowed our Air Force to sustain critical support to overseas contingency operations. We cannot allow their readiness and availability to degrade because of equipment challenges.

Some of the examples include our security forces have a shortage of weapons due to depot delays. Our communication networks need modernization. Civil engineers have shortfall of depot-funded emergency management equipment. And our 1950s vintage deployable air traffic control radars face significant challenges in procuring and replacing vintage test equipment and parts.

These shortages affect not only our readiness for war, but our readiness to respond to domestic crisis.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your time and support of our Air National Guard, and I stand ready to answer your questions.

ABERCROMBIE:

Thank you very much, General Wyatt.

We'll go to questions in reverse order of seniority, with this observation: General Carpenter, Secretary Gates may take some comfort, or measure of comfort, in the observation about 70 percent equipment being available as compared to 9/11. I don't take comfort in that at all. That's what he's got to stretch for to try and come with a, quote, "positive," unquote, statement.

We have a real serious problem. Almost a decade has passed since then. That doesn't take into account recapitalization and modernization or what the status of the equipment was at that point pre-9/11. I only need to reference General Wyatt's last comment about radar equipment, let alone parts. And then, we're only at 70 percent.

So I think I'm not -- I suppose that was meant to comfort us, but it's had the opposite reaction on me. You needn't comment on it. I'm just making that observation.

And we'll move to Congressman Wilson, to be followed by Congressman Kissell, and then Mr. Hunter.

WILSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And General Carpenter, General Wyatt, thank you very much for being here. I am really proud of both your service, and the Guard in general. As a 31-year

veteran of the Army National Guard, I've really never been prouder of what the Guard's doing.

As I visit, the professionalism, the competence, capabilities, the dedication, esprit de corps has never been higher. I also am particularly grateful that my former brigade, the 218th Brigade, completed last year a year serving in Afghanistan.

And I can report to you that my former colleagues are just so grateful for what they see as an opportunity to defeat the terrorists overseas to protect American families at home. And I'm just so proud of what they have done.

And then, I'm particularly grateful that my oldest son served in Iraq with the Field Artillery. He's now JAG. My third son is a signal officer with the Army Guard, and he has just transferred to logistics. And then, our fourth son just joined the Army National Guard. He is simultaneous drilling with Army ROTC.

And I know the reason that they joined, and I did have one son off-track. He's a doctor in the Navy who served in Iraq. But the reason that my wife was successful training these guys to do well is because we would meet Guard members at Army or wherever, and my sons were impressed by the people they met and wanted to serve with.

And I do have to point out, with the Air Guard, I was honored to be on a delegation for the 64th anniversary of the invasion at Iwo Jima. And General Wyatt, you'd be very proud that, as we were coming into the Japanese air station, they had one picture taped to the window, and it was an F-16 of the Swamp Fox Squadron, Air National Guard McEntire Joint Air Base, signed by Dean Pennington. And so you're appreciated around the world.

I also want to point out how much the people of South Carolina depend and appreciate on the Guard for our annual concern that we have about hurricanes. And so the Guard has just been instrumental for evacuation, for recovery relief, and tornadoes. And then, General, you mentioned ice storms. On the rare occasion that we have snow or ice, the National Guard is there.

As I point this out, the equipment is always a concern. And I appreciated that you pointed out, General Carpenter, that there was the cascaded equipment, and that's what I used. And it was pretty good, but having served at the National Training Center nine years ago, I'm very pleased that we have modern equipment now. Everything's been superseded by multiple generations of much better equipment.

But as we have equipment that is declared excess in Iraq or anywhere in the theater, do our adjutant generals have the ability to try to put in a bid for this?

CARPENTER:

First of all, sir, thank you very much for your service. The 218th Brigade, as

you probably remember, we shared their farewell ceremony as they left to do the Task Force Phoenix mission in Afghanistan. And they were in a particular situation where the mission was being expanded from not just mentoring the Afghan National Army, but mentoring the Afghan National Police. And they just did an absolutely great job, and we're very proud of their service at a national level also.

With regard to your -- excuse me, sir, what was your question again?

WILSON:

The question would be as to equipment that could be declared excess, do our adjutant generals have the ability to at least make the request?

CARPENTER:

Sir, I have been involved in a couple of the session with regard to what is the strategy for equipment as we see the off- ramping in Iraq. And the Army's position across the board is that, if the equipment is not excess, the Army is adamant -- and that means excess both to the Army and the Army National Guard across the entire Army -- if it's not excess, we want it brought home, and we want it -- if it's in some state that can be repaired, absolutely. And that equipment then is scheduled for distribution back to the Army units and back to the Army National Guard units, sir. So that's the position.

Now, understanding that what happens on the ground over there is going to be dictated by the situation, but, for the most part, that's the going in rule here as we off-ramp and deal with the equipment that's in Iraq.

ABERCROMBIE:

You have one minute, Mr. Wilson.

WILSON:

And a proverbial problem is maintenance of armories. And so often, that's dependent upon state general assemblies and state government funding. What can be done to help back up the proverbial "leaking roofs" of armories? Is there a plan to help fund renovation of armories?

CARPENTER:

Sir, the Army National Guard received upwards of \$200 million in the economic stimulus package recently, and that package was designed specifically to deal with those kinds of things, what we call maintenance and repair as well as

environment upgrades for lighting, heating and those kinds of utility efforts there. So it is not going to solve the problem entirely, but we understand the requirement, and we continue to make the case to the Army.

WILSON:

Thank you very much.

ABERCROMBIE:

Thank you.

Mr. Kissell, five minutes.

KISSELL:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Generals, for being here, but I especially want to recognize Sergeant Marquez (ph) for your service and just recognition that NCOs are certainly the backbone of the service. And thank you so much, and congratulations on your marriage. And hopefully you'll get together here pretty soon.

The service that the Guard provides us is so important. On April the 14th, I had the opportunity to be in Fayetteville (ph), North Carolina, to watch the 30th Heavy tactical Brigade deploy, 4,000 soldiers, West Virginia, Colorado, but mostly from North Carolina. And I watched those men and women getting ready to go serve our country was just a special moment.

We worry about trying to figure out how to fight the next war instead of the last war. And I worry, based upon what we are looking at today in this hearing, that we may be trying to get ready to fight the next war using the last war's equipment, or no equipment at all.

As we look at these percentages, and we can get lost in percentages, but how much -- what percentage of the equipment do we need, do we have now to train with? And roughly what percentage of that would be modern equipment that would actually be something they could expect to use in theater?

CARPENTER:

Sir, from the Army National Guard, right now, the fill of equipment across the formations in the Army National Guard is 76 percent. Now, of that 76 percent, 13 percent of it is either deployed, in reset, or being prepared to deploy. And so available to the governors right now is 63 percent of all the equipment.

The subset, the critical dual use equipment I talked to earlier, there's 65 percent of that equipment available for the Army National Guard and the governors for use in the homeland mission. Our goal is to get to 100 percent fill on the critical dual-use equipment.

ABERCROMBIE:

Excuse me, General. Just for everybody's information, you're talking about critical dual-use at this stage, right?

CARPENTER:

Yes, sir. Critical dual-use equipment, the governors have in hand right now 65 percent as an average across all the states. And so there's still 35 percent of that equipment that's not available for them.

We are over our end strength of 100 percent. And so if you call a unit, like the 30th out of North Carolina, for instance, for an emergency and disaster mission and they've only got 65 percent of their equipment and 100 percent of their soldiers, it leaves you asking the question, what capability do you not have by not having that other 35 percent of the equipment.

So we do have those percentages available for use. Now, in the case of the 30th, when they got ready to deploy and went through the mobilization process, they were filled to 100 percent of the requirement that they needed to deploy overseas. And by the way, they go on mission in Iraq mid-month, and we're very proud of their accomplishments.

ABERCROMBIE:

You still have a minute and a half.

WYATT:

Do you want me to answer that from the air? Yes, sir.

The Air National Guard has been, I think of all the seven Reserve components, has probably been integrated and resourced by our parent service perhaps a little bit better than the other Reserve components. We've been rotating overseas with the Air Force and AEF rotation since the early '90s.

But when we talk about the critical use equipment, you're right. The percentages are a little misleading because, in the Air National Guard side, even though our percentages are higher, 84 percent across the country of our critical use equipment, dual-use equipment, a lot of that is very old.

Forty percent of our vehicles are past their service life, and it's only due to the great maintenance competencies of the Air National Guard that we're able to keep those vehicles running. The radar systems that we talked about earlier are old. They're decrepit, but because we've got some geniuses working the maintenance on those systems, we're able to keep them running.

But we're at that period of time where we've just about exhausted our capabilities to keep that equipment going. The war fighting equipment, the jets, the deployable equipment, we're fielded at a pretty good rate. But again, a lot of that is extremely old.

We talk about some of the new emerging systems, like air support operation squadron's TACP. We've not yet been fielded the equipment to the levels that make them combat ready. And without the proper amounts of equipment, we can't get them trained to the point where they can be deployable. Same thing would be true of our air operation centers. We need some more training equipment to make sure that, when a call comes, that we're able to answer the call of our country.

ABERCROMBIE:

Thank you, General Wyatt.

Gentlemen, perhaps you can give us a little bit more of a breakdown of what the 65 percent, or the 45 percent means. You may have a full complement of pens and pencils, but you may then have 10 percent of what you need in vehicles or rifles or whatever.

So maybe we need a little bit more definition, if you will, as to how that breaks down within the percentages. As Mr. Kissell said, there's statistics, and then there's information.

Mr. Hunter left, so next will be Mr. Lobionco (sic). I'm sticking to the five minutes, by the way, because I'm told we're going to have votes coming up, and it's liable to be a long series.

LOBIONDO:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing and for your close attention to details.

Gentlemen, thank you for your service to our nation.

General Wyatt, I was going to spend a few minutes in an opening statement talking about the ASA mission and the Air National Guard, but you did a good job, I think in your statement, covering this. And I, like my colleagues, and especially Mr. Wilson, are just amazed at the dedication and the incredible job the men and women of the Air Guard are performing.

You talked about the problem with equipment, and we call it a fighter gap. We call it a bathtub. There's a lot of different names. And you articulately used the numbers of the 80 percent, the number of years and the hours, but what is the plan? We've had hearing after hearing, year after year, where the problem is recognized by more and more people.

And I bothered the chairman out in Hawaii during the break because we had gotten some additional information -- and that's why I'm especially appreciative, Mr. Chairman, of your doing this hearing -- that we're just not getting any answers. So we're understanding the problem better, but each day, the clock ticks.

Is there an interim buy that's planned? At what level are the discussions taking place? What level of comfort can we as members take to when we will see a plan?

WYATT:

Mr. Abercrombie, I hope that when the budget is released, we'll be able to give a little more detail and a little more fidelity to an answer.

My concern is this: we know the problem. We've recognized the problem. The position of the Air National Guard is that -- I'd like to refer to it as flying a cautious formation with the United States Air Force. The Air Force has a recapitalization plan that involves fifth-generation airplanes.

We think that if the United States Air Force, depending upon the analysis of the recommendations made by the secretary of defense, we think that the solution rests with the United States Air Force. If they will write the Air National Guard in to their recapitalization plan early in sufficient numbers, we can address some, but not all, of the fighter gap. We will rely upon a cascade of some legacy aircraft from the active duty Air Force to the Air National Guard to help with the problem.

But we are flying a cautious wing formation in that we recognize that, in order for that plan to be successful, there would have to be sufficient numbers of jets purchased, fielded to the Air Guard early as opposed to the current plan, which is late. And if there are any delays in production or shortages of capability, we need to have a backup plan.

And the Air National Guard has been, and continues, to examine plans such as service life extension programs on our F-16s and, to some degree, our F-15s. Not just for the airframe, which is the immediate problem, but if you service life extend those jets, you need to also consider that we use these jets not just for ASA, for the Air Sovereignty Alert, but they are a critical part of the nation's defense overseas and need to be fully integrated into the capabilities of the fifth generation.

So as you (inaudible) airplanes, you also need to improve ASA radars, sensors, gateway communication systems so that you don't lose the dual use, if you will, of those jets, the ASA and the operations overseas. We're also keeping

open our options to take a look at fourth-generation fighters.

But I would caution against a fleet separate and distinct from the Air Force, whichever way the Air Force decides to go.

LOBIONDO:

Well, I certainly would agree with that.

Can you share with us your personal opinion about an interim buy, that 4.5 generation aircraft? I mean, is this something you would advocate? I know there's some folks who believe that the F-35 ought to be the way to go, and that ought to be accelerated. Can you tell us what your personal beliefs would be, your personal opinion would be of the best way to solve the problem?

WYATT:

I guess if the question were asked of me, how would you ensure ...

LOBIONDO:

I'm asking that question.

WYATT:

OK. How would you ensure that the Air National Guard can continue to perform the number one mission of the entire Department of Defense, and that's defense of the homeland, I would tell you that the Air National Guard would do the mission with whatever resources we could get.

If the Air Force's plan does not cover the Air National Guard in recapitalization with fifth-generation fighters, we would turn to fourth-generation, 4.5-generation, as a possible alternative, recognizing that each of the options available has its pros, but it also has its down side, too. Service life extension programs would be an option. They are perhaps the cheapest option, but you never know what you're going to get into when you get inside of an airplane.

And if we're going to do the service life extension programs, we need to consider that that product needs to get us -- it would only be a bridging mission, or a bridging aircraft, if you would, to a future capability that we would need to get into.

When we talk about fourth-generation fighters, we need to look beyond the airframe cost and think about the capabilities that that particular jet would need not just to do the ASA mission, which is mission number one, but also to not lose the efficiencies that the Air Guard provides in doing the homeland security

mission, the ASA mission, but also the overseas fight.

So if we do fourth generation buys, we would need to do that in conjunction with taking a look at the capability that a ASA radar offers, that the gateway communications comm, data link, making sure that the fourth-generation buy is compatible with the weapons systems of the fifth-generation fighter. And when you stack all of those together, we need to take a hard look at the cost of that platform and how it would compare to fifth-generation platforms.

And a lot of that depends upon how many of the fourth-gen, how many of the fifth-gen fighters you would buy, because they're dependent -- the price is dependent upon the total number. So it's a difficult question to ask without knowing where the Air Force is going and without knowing the current budget situation and how that will affect the fifth-generation buy.

ABERCROMBIE:

When the budget then -- and Mr. Gates' presentation -- which is imminent -- is presented, could you reconsider your answer and then send it on to Mr. Lobiondo and to the subcommittee?

WYATT:

I would be happy to, sir, with a little more fidelity to where the Department of Defense is going, yes, sir.

ABERCROMBIE:

You've got the question in mind?

WYATT:

Yes, sir.

ABERCROMBIE:

OK. And same, General Carpenter, if you have anything that you could add once Mr. Gates' proposal comes forward in the context that Mr. Lobiondo established, OK?

We'll go to Mr. Kratovil now, to be followed by Mr. Coffman and Ms. Tsongas.

KRATOVIL:

Gentlemen, thank you for being here today, and again, for your service to our country.

General Wyatt, I want to ask you a question that's a particular concern in Maryland. As you know, Maryland's eight C-130s are being relocated, and Maryland and five other states were slated to receive the Joint Cargo Aircraft, but recent reports at least seem to indicate that that may not happen.

What is the plan for the National Guard in terms of maintaining the capability of Maryland and those other states if, in fact, that comes to fruition?

WYATT:

The situation in Maryland is that they are one of the states that is scheduled to receive the Air National Guard component of the Joint Cargo Aircraft as it currently exists. And I don't know what the future will hold. I haven't seen any announced details. But the existing plan program is for the Air National Guard to get 24 of the JCA. Four of those would be bedded down in Maryland at Martin State.

If that does not happen, we would look to, first of all, find some sort of bridge mission for the unit to keep the competencies of the pilots and the maintenance crews intact as long as possible. That's a perishable skill.

And my concern, whether that's in the context of JCA or the fighter Bathtub or tankers, if we don't have iron on the ramp for these units to fly, we will use those treasures, if you will, because it takes a lifetime -- it takes a generation to develop the skills, the expertise, the maturity of the Air National Guard.

If we lose a platform at a particular location for a period of time, the unit atrophies. There is a possibility of other emerging missions that we could lay into Maryland, but without the acquisition of any additional iron, it might not be a flying mission. And when you lose those skill sets, it will literally take you a generation to develop it back to the level that it currently is.

KRATOVIL:

What would some of those bridge missions be? What are some of the likely possibilities?

WYATT:

We're seeing a continued demand in ISR capability. We're seeing a continued demand in cyber. I think that is an area of great expansion. Irregular warfare. We're taking a look at different capabilities and perhaps platforms that might be attractive or necessary to fulfill our requirement for the United States Air Force.

The demand for capability across the Air Force exceeds the Air National Guard's ability to supply that capability. We would need to -- obviously there's a great training tail that would attach to that as we convert from one capability to another, and there would be a requirement for equipment. And if it does involve a new flying platform, obviously we would need the iron on the ramp for the folks to train.

KRATOVIL:

(OFF-MIKE)

ABERCROMBIE:

That's it. Thank you.

Mr. Coffman?

COFFMAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ABERCROMBIE:

Just before you do that, excuse me.

Obviously we're going to have to have votes. I know Mr. Bartlett has a question he needs to ask. If it's OK, is it all right that we do that? Because I think this will -- I don't think we'll come back. We appreciate you being here. If you have other questions, submit them to me and we'll get them to both generals.

And we are going to have another hearing. This is the preliminary. This is a hearing for the bill itself, I assure everybody. So we'll go to Mr. Coffman, and then if it's all right, we'll go to Mr. Bartlett, and we'll close.

COFFMAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Carpenter, you had mentioned that when Guard units go to Afghanistan, that they'll fall on the equipment of the unit left behind. And sometimes I suspect, if they're part of the buildup in Afghanistan that's going to be going on now, I suppose they may be first in with their gear, leaving their gear for -- could be a Guard unit, could be a regular Army unit, could be an Army Reserve unit.

And you mentioned issues in accountability. What is the status now of Guard units? When are they going to get their gear back? How is that process going to work?

CARPENTER:

The process that we have in place right now in Iraq is something we call theater-provided equipment. And so the Guard unit deploys with not the full complement of equipment, but falls in on a set of equipment when it gets in theater, uses that equipment, and then, when they leave theater, they leave that theater-provided equipment in place.

We don't have that large a set of what we call TPE, Theater- Provided Equipment in Afghanistan. And by the way, the way we got the TPE in Iraq was for units to leave their equipment behind for use of the follow-on unit.

Process for us in Afghanistan has been for a Guard unit to leave equipment for a Guard unit, and that's worked well. The issue for us, though, is that, when you transfer equipment between components, when you either leave equipment behind and lose possession of it or transfer it to an active Army unit, there's a DOD instruction called 1225.6, and that instruction requires that, before the equipment is transferred, that the equipment has to be directed to be left, and there has to be a payback plan in place, and that that agreement has to be signed off by the secretary of defense.

We've not done any of that since the early days of Iraq, and frankly, we have a little ways to go in terms of putting those procedures in place. But as I mentioned earlier, we're working together with the Army. We think we've got a solution for this in terms of both the agreement and the signature by the sec-def. And so we're anxious to implement that if it's required.

COFFMAN:

Both General Wyatt and General Carpenter, in terms of aviation assets, where do you stand relative to your regular component in terms of modernization? I know, for instance, in the Colorado Air Guard, they're hoping to transition from the F-16 to the F-35.

I have no idea where that discussion is. And I think in the Army Guard, I think that we still have units with Hueys, I think, UH-1s out in Colorado. Where do we stand in terms of modernization relative to our active duty component?

WYATT:

Regarding your question in the F-35, the most current plan that I've seen, the official plan that the Air Force has on recapitalization of Air National Guard F-16 units, including Colorado with the F-35, has the fielding to the Air National Guard

late to need (ph), not coming to the Guard in time to solve the problem with Colorado and most of our other F-16 units. So it's late to need. We need to readjust the plan.

As far as modernization, the Air National Guard has historically relied upon the Air Force to help us with modernization of our existing fleets. But occasionally, oftentimes, those modernization requirements aren't funded, and we rely heavily upon the National Guard and Reserve equipment account appropriations to do that.

The targeting pods that your unit has in Colorado is a great example of that. Precision munitions delivery is a requirement of the COCOMS, and historically, the Air National Guard has not been funded for targeting pods. And so we have basically built up our fleet of targeting pods through the NGREA process.

And so we're very appreciative. That's an example of how we use that fund to modernize and become integrated with the active duty components. But I hope that answers your question, Congressman.

ABERCROMBIE:

Thank you.

COFFMAN:

One question, Mr. Chairman. What do you mean by the transition from the F-16 to the F-35 too late?

WYATT:

Yes, sir. I don't have the waterfall charts with me here, but most of our F-16 units, as I said, begin to lose their service life over the next eight year. And the last bed-down plan that I have seen from the United States Air Force regarding F-35, other than one unit in the first four bed-down plans -- OFPs, we call them -- there's only one Air National Guard unit in there.

The bulk of the Air National Guard recapitalization in the F-35 occurs in the out years, approaching 2022 and thereafter. Most of our units age out in the 2017 to 2018 timeframe. And so most of our units are uncovered under their current plan.

As I indicated at the beginning, the Air Force has the capability of covering that fighter gap by reworking their bed-down plan to include the Air National Guard earlier in the bed-down as they acquire airplanes. The numbers are extremely critical, and the rate of production is extremely critical.

So we'll need to see what shakes out in that regard before I could more fully

answer your question. But right now, under the current Air Force plan, the Air National Guard is basically uncovered.

ABERCROMBIE:

Thank you.

COFFMAN:

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

ABERCROMBIE:

Yes, right on it.

I want to extend my gratitude to Mr. Fleming, Ms. Gifford and Ms. Tsongas, and we'll go to Mr. Bartlett, and this will be the final question and observation.

BARTLETT:

Mr. Chairman, I'll be very brief, because the vote clock is running.

As I remember history, I think that the Army and the Air Force both expressed the need for a small in-theater cargo aircraft. A decision was made that that should be a joint procurement, and the Air Force, more than a bit reluctantly, was kind of pulled kicking and screaming into this joint procurement of the Joint Cargo Aircraft with the Army.

Knowing that history, I was more than a bit confused when the secretary in his press statement said that, from now on, that program was going to be totally an Air Force program, who didn't want the program to begin with, and that the Army is going to get much fewer aircraft.

My first question is, are you aware of any analysis that was done prior to making the decision to reduce the Army's stated need of 78 aircraft down to 38 aircraft? Was there a study that indicated that? If the answer is no, just say no.

WYATT:

You're right, sir. The requirement, as expressed by the JROC, the Joint Requirements Oversight Committee, is 78 C-27s. I'm not aware of any other subsequent studies.

BARTLETT:

Thank you.

With the retirement of the C-23 Sherpa, without the Joint Cargo Aircraft to support the Guard's mission in theater, what are you going to do?

WYATT:

The Air National Guard was not part of the Air Force that was kicking and screaming on avoiding this mission. We welcome the mission, and we will do it with whatever number of airplanes we're allowed.

But the question is not necessarily the color of service flying the airplane, but the question is how do you sustain the requirement, which I understand is currently 16 to 18 airplanes in theater, with a number less than 78. And in my opinion, you have to have 78 airplanes, as the JROC study indicated, to sustain the number of airplanes anticipated to be deployed continuously in theater regardless of who's flying it and who's maintaining it.

BARTLETT:

So, without the 78, we really are going to be hard-pressed to meet our needs in theater.

Back home here, with the C-23 being retired, what are the plans without the C-27J to support the Guards at home, national homeland security and disaster preparedness relief missions? If we can't even meet our requirements over there, is there going to be nothing left here?

CARPENTER:

Sir, from an Army perspective, a couple items I'd like to point out.

There are 42 C-23s within the Army National Guard right now, and the mission is in Iraq for the C-23s right now, performing the responsibility of getting the cargo to the last tactical mile. And over the last five years, that has been exclusively an Army National Guard mission.

We have hauled 180,000 soldiers, passengers, carried 62 million tons of cargo. And in Hurricane Katrina, we had almost all of our available C-23s were involved in that particular mission.

Our concern was is that the Joint Cargo Aircraft was the modernization program for the C-23s. We expect the C-23's lifespan to be over in about five years. And so we've got five years to solve this problem, is the bottom line, with regard to replacement for that capability within the United States, both in the homeland mission and in Iraq.

It's not a pressurized aircraft, so that aircraft's not available for use in Afghanistan. So we've got a couple problems we've got to face.

BARTLETT:

Thank you for your answers. I was more than a bit confused, as I stated, when the secretary made this statement. And I gather that there's some concern about our ability to meet our commitments in the future if this aircraft is not available.

And I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you.

ABERCROMBIE:

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Bartlett.

Obviously, the presentation to be made by the secretary and the particular elements with which you're associated is going to be crucial to our decision-making on the defense bill.

So if you could take today's hearing as kind of a baseline for some of the answers and observations, if you could share them then at that point with us, we're going to send you some questions, as well, that have arisen as a result of this, including some from Ms. Giffords and others.

And if we could get that back perhaps -- not necessarily tomorrow or the next day, but when you've had a chance to answer them in the context of Mr. Gates' presentation, then I think we'll be able to have a very fruitful and beneficial effect on the defense bill. You have friends here in this subcommittee and on this committee, I can assure you.

And with that, I thank you all, and we'll bring the hearing to a close.

CQ Transcriptions, May 5, 2009

List of Panel Members and Witnesses

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WITNESSES:

LT. GEN. HARRY WYATT III, DIRECTOR, AIR NATIONAL GUARD

MAJ. GEN. RAYMON CARPENTER, ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR,
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